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PEOPLE, PLACES & THINGS

# Mayor's right-hand man helps make Fourth a blast

When Mike Hertz first got the job of overseeing Sheboygan's Fourth of July activities, he didn't have a "Serious and Sane" from a "Bath in the Clouds." That was in 1974.

In the intervening years, the lanky right-hand man in Sheboygan mayor's has become thoroughly familiar with all the aerial stunts fired in the state's third largest Fourth of July fireworks display.

He personally programmed each of 2,307 shells we'll see in the Johnsonville Big Taste Bang fireworks display scheduled at the South Pier at 9:30 p.m. Thursday.

Shell prices range from \$7 to the biggest shells, \$100 to \$140 for a 12-inch.

Hertz learned a lot that first year. The company's city had committed to about 60 in fireworks that had only one employee here. He told Hertz, "You'll need some helpers if there was going to be a show."

Hertz finally lined up some assistants July 4th, but the company didn't get a chance to tell them they had to put the correct diameter shell in the corresponding slot in the corresponding slot when shooting off fireworks.

They stayed. Each shell is a larger diameter mortar, and some shells included way above where they'd normally go. And because it was a dry year, bushes and trees were set on fire on the way down.

The fire department, which is always on standby for the event, saw plenty of action that year. Hertz said.

"I carefully check into company safety records now," he said. "For most of the time since then, we couldn't find the guy."



**John Hertz**  
Columbus

Barboursville Fireworks Co. from Barboursville, West Virginia, is the company that produces the fireworks. Hertz said, "and had that horrible feeling."

Turns out the concussion from the shell blasted the man into Lake Michigan. He was fished out, taken to the hospital and released that night after treatment.

The city fire department was the only one that was on duty that night. The early-arriving squadrons thought it was under attack and broke off in all directions, Hertz said, laughing as he thought about the incident.

"It wasn't funny at the time, but I've shared it plenty by the moment a shell of the"



**MIKE HERTZ**  
Columbus

4438," Hertz said.

One of the things Hertz is most proud of is getting the cooperation of Johnsonville in paying for the fireworks and the support of about 18 other companies that pay for the parade and entertainment.

Previous newspapers fished the bill.

Because most of his work time is spent handling claims, negotiating contracts and ensuring the city's cable TV financing contract, Hertz has coordinated the Fourth of July fun.

And his expertise at it means he literally got the most bang for the buck.

*John Hertz is a columnist for the Press. He can be reached by phone at 457-7711, ext. 191, or by e-mail at jhertz@sheboyganpress.com.*



## YOUR VIEWS

### State agency helps all dairy farmers

I want to respond to a line editorial in the Sheboygan Press on Wisconsin's dairy industry. The editorial makes mention of the Department of Commerce assistance to the dairy industry and poses over challenges facing the industry.

The Department of Commerce is committed to helping the dairy industry — both producers and processors — grow and prosper. We have made a significant investment in helping the state's family farms undertake a wide variety of business projects.

Over the past four years, Commerce has made more than \$47 million in grants to help small dairy producers obtain professional assistance for business planning. These family farmers understand that dairying is a business and that they can improve their quality of life by improving the bottom line. An ongoing survey shows that more than three-quarters of these producers have gone forward with projects that are adding \$43 million to Wisconsin's total supply.

The main customer for the milk produced in Wisconsin is the state's cheese industry. Wisconsin is the nation's No. 1 cheese producer, but currently our state must import 9 percent of its milk protein to meet the needs of this industry. This adds cost to the final product. For the cheese industry to remain competitive, therefore, Wisconsin's large and small dairy farmers must produce more milk.

That is why Commerce has provided Wisconsin as an export market for dairy and sought to recruit farms that will add significantly to Wisconsin's overall milk production.

The primary competition challenge our producers face is not from each other but from dairy farmers outside the region. In the face of challenges by California and other states, Wisconsin must expand capacity or be left behind.

On the issue of environmental management, Wisconsin has always been committed to the wise and careful stewardship of its natural resources. Large dairy farms must manage their operations in accord with numerous environmental regulations that do not apply to small farms. Therefore it is not reasonable to imply — as the editorial does — that a large farm by definition constitutes an environmental hazard.

The Department of Commerce is working to promote a growing dairy industry composed of both large and small farms and a dairy business climate that will enhance profitability and competitiveness.

**BRENDA J. BLANCHARD**  
Secretary  
Department of Commerce  
Madison

### TCumseh disappointed with EPA's plan

By now you have probably read the article about the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's recent decision for the Sheboygan River and the results of the multi-million-dollar remedial investigation and feasibility study that EPA completed last year.

TCumseh is disappointed in the EPA remedy, which goes well beyond what is environmentally protective and cost-effective. The remedy ignores the results of the multi-million-dollar remedial investigation and feasibility study that EPA completed last year.

TCumseh remains committed to global stewardship of the work and reaching a reasonable global solution to the Superfund and natural resource cleanup claims.

We think the community for being so supportive and patient during this process. We will continue to keep the community updated as we move forward in our discussions with the various government agencies over the next weeks and months.

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